



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 17, 2003

For Information Contact Public Affairs
HARRIET BERNICK
Telephone: (602) 514-7736
Pager: (602) 356-0004

MAN SENTENCED TO 14 YEARS IN PRISON FOR POSSESSION AND IMPORTATION OF OVER 58 POUNDS OF METHAMPHETAMINE

TUCSON, ARIZONA –The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on November 17, 2003, Luis Gerardo Lopez-Jorqueras, 3/17/78, of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced to 168 months by United States District Judge Cindy K. Jorgensen, in Tucson, Arizona.

The charges stemmed from an incident that occurred on March 17, 2003, when the defendant approached the Grand Avenue Port of Entry in Nogales, Arizona, driving a 1993 Oldsmobile Royale. It was determined that the defendant was the registered owner of the vehicle. Upon inspecting the vehicle at primary, Customs Inspector Leticia McKenna discovered a problem with the tires of the vehicle and referred the vehicle to secondary inspection. At secondary inspection, forty-six packages were removed from all four tires. The substance inside the packages was determined to be methamphetamine, with a weight of 58.92 lbs. Subsequent lab analysis determined the methamphetamine to be 96 to 98 % pure. Upon being interviewed by Special Agents Paul Bland and Sergio Diaz, the defendant admitted to knowledge of contraband, but

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stated that he thought it was going to be marijuana. Further, the defendant stated that he was to be paid \$1,000.00 to deliver the vehicle with the contraband to another individual.

Lopez-Jorqueras had entered pleas of guilty on August 18, 2003 to the Indictment, which charged him with Possession with Intent to Distribute Methamphetamine and Importation of Methamphetamine.

At sentencing, the Court noted the amount of methamphetamine involved was thirteen times above the threshold amount for the highest Base Offense Level listed in the Drug Quantity Table. The Court also departed upward two levels because the substance involved was methamphetamine. The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.

The prosecution was handled by Judson T. Mihok, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-0810-TUC-CKJ
RELEASE NUMBER: 2002-199

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